



Chilton Old Girls Association AGM Minutes

Sunday 3 August 2024, Chilton St James School

Introductions

Crystal Mischief welcomed the Old Girls, 2023 committee, Chair of the Board and our Patron Mrs Caroline Robertson - Principal.

Attendance

Cara Foothead (PY 1974), Michelle Hughes (staff), Amanda Edward (nee Crone) (PY 2003), Jimmy Zhou (board), Elizabeth Friend, Liz Coats, Caroline Robertson (Patron), Crystal Mischief (PY 1993)

Karakia | Prayer

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hau hū
Tihei mauri ora!

*Cease the winds from the west
Cease the winds from the south
Let the breeze blow over the land
Let the breeze blow over the ocean
Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air.
A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day.*

Apologies

Mary Taylor, Merran Hamilton, Libby Tosswell,

Minutes from the last meeting

Attendees reviewed minutes from the 2023 AGM.

Matters arising from previous minutes

The discussion touched upon a new native garden project and the naming of a green space as the Suzanne Duncan Law.

An error regarding the name of the primary school was also noted for correction. The correct name is primary school.

Motion to approve minutes: Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. Moved: Crystal Mischief. Seconded: Kate Chapman.

Financial reports

There have been no significant changes in the financial statements over the last 12 months. The financial statements comprise two documents: financial statements comments and the annual report.

As of March 31st, there is a surplus of \$1,065

Several expenditures are highlighted:

- inspiration booklets with Bibles and words of wisdom for year 13 graduates, for which the Old Girls/Alumni pays for half;
- providing judges and badges for the primary speech competition;
- annual donation to the library for books, a practice that dates back to the 1920s.

The accountants have advised preparing a high-level budget for each year.

The primary action for the coming year is to create a high-level budget that links back to the organisation's four key strategic priorities. This budget will help determine how much money can be spent in each of these areas. The goal is to have this budget socialised and fully sorted out by the same time next year.

Additionally, the Auckland branch of an old girl's alumni donated \$600 to the Nikau Foundation as they no longer meet and were folding.

Financial reports were accepted as a true and accurate record. Moved: Kate Chapman.
Seconded: Crystal Mischief

Matters arising

St. James statue. In the boxes Margaret Maynard sent to the archives there is a statue of St James, which is currently in a box because it has been dropped and damaged. There is some uncertainty about where the statue used to be displayed, with suggestions including the front display, reception, or the hall.

Liz Coats recounts seeing the statue as a child and initially thinking it was Jesus before being told it was Saint James.

Another point raised is that the statue may have been gifted to the school when it was founded. Despite its damaged condition, there is a sentiment that the statue deserves to be on display because it is associated with the school's history and there would be a story behind it.

Question: Is the purpose of the alumni to create and maintain sense of connection with ex-students? The primary goal is to create and maintain a sense of connection with former students through engagement activities.

Key aspects discussed include:

- **Engagement Activities:** The initial focus has been on inviting "old girls"/alumni back to the school for sporting events and cultural events, as well as hosting events specifically for them. The intention is to get alumni from various year groups back to school.

- **Intergenerational Connection and School Identity:** Alumni engagement is seen as a way to facilitate information exchange between generations, allowing current students to learn from

the experiences and traditions of former students. This helps reinforce the school's identity and brand.

- **Support for Current Students:** Engaging alumni can lead to support for Chilton owned businesses and mentoring opportunities. It can also be integrated into the careers cycle, with alumni nurturing and enhancing the daily activities of the school.
- **Long-Term Financial Benefits:** Our focus is not to fundraise but to connect and nurture our relationship with former students. A long-term hope is that engaged alumni will support us financially, however our focus is not donations. This requires consistent engagement through events and other initiatives.
- **Outreach to Alumni in Different Locations:** Recognising that many alumni may not live locally, there's a need to outreach to those who don't live in the local area. The idea of finding willing volunteers in different parts of the world to organise events is being considered, drawing inspiration from schools like Scots and Wanganui Collegiate.
- **Learning from Other Schools:** The success of alumni programs at other schools, such as Dio, with significant annual fee contributions and active event organisation, is noted as a potential model. The strong alumni engagement in boys' schools, particularly around sporting events, is also highlighted.
- **Targeted Engagement Strategies:** Plans are underway to focus database efforts on the last eight graduating years and the upcoming 2025 cohort. The aim is to organise events for specific year groups (e.g., 2005, 1995, etc.). Informal gatherings, even just for drinks, are seen as a good way to keep alumni connected.
- **Leveraging Existing Events:** Utilising the school's sporting events (e.g., hockey, netball) as opportunities to engage alumni and encourage their support is being considered.

A challenge identified is the database limitations in effectively reaching and connecting with alumni. However, there is a focus on building momentum by engaging recent graduates and gradually expanding outreach to other year groups.

President report

Selection Process: The alumni secretary role attracted five applicants. Kirby Halum was selected as the top candidate due to her outstanding qualifications and experience.

Professional Background: Kirby holds a PhD in Literature and brings extensive experience from roles at Auckland Grammar—where she managed alumni databases and supported fundraising—and NZ Trade and Enterprise, where she worked with New Zealand exporters.

Early Impact: Despite working only part-time hours, Kirby has already delivered significant contributions. She has developed strategic reports outlining organisational strengths and weaknesses and addressed gaps in policies and strategy.

Work Ethic and Commitment: Kirby is balancing her role with caring for her baby but remains committed to staying professionally engaged. She is praised for being resource-conscious and aligning her work with the organisation's limited budget.

Team Sentiment: The team expresses deep appreciation for Kirby's contributions and is enthusiastic about the value and expertise she brings to the role.

Motion to approve presidents reports: Moved: Crystal Mischief. Seconded: Jimmy Zhou.

Election of the committee.

Growing Interest: There is enthusiasm about increased interest in joining the committee, and the team aims to recruit additional members to enhance their efforts.

Constitutional Amendment for Voting Rights: A Special General Meeting will be required to amend the constitution. The proposed changes would allow staff members, former students (alumni), male students, and teachers to gain voting rights.

Meeting Structure: The committee meets four times a year via Zoom, typically in the evenings. Meetings last around one hour. Additional tasks are primarily event-related and the overall workload is considered manageable.

Collaborative Goals: The committee is keen to build stronger ties with the parents' association and plans to co-opt a board representative. This move is intended to foster better collaboration and bolster support for committee initiatives.

2024 Committee are: Kate Chapman, Amanda Crone (PA Rep) Kara Foothead, Michelle Huges (School Rep), and Crystal Mischief were elected to the committee.

Presidents' role

Crystal proposes that we have co-presidents for the 2024/5 year. The proposed arrangement would involve Crystal focusing on IT responsibilities, while Kate would handle coordination with the school.

The primary long-term goal of this co-presidency is to facilitate the building of a larger committee, eventually leading to the establishment of vice-president roles.

Kate Chapman and Crystal Mischief were elected as Co-Presidents.

Patron's Report

Caroline Robertson – Patron delivered their report. She acknowledges the potential for a strong alumni network at the school, drawing from her own experience at a school with a well-established alumni community.

They acknowledge that the school's alumni engagement has not yet reached its full potential but believe it can be revitalised with effort. Caroline reflected on their initial challenges in building relationships with former students because she was new to the position but now feels more confident in reconnecting them with the school.

Caroline recognises that not all students had positive experiences and want to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcomed back, regardless of past difficulties.

Caroline expresses deep affection for the school and its close-knit, supportive community. She highlighted the unique connections fostered by the school's size and the warmth of students, sharing heartfelt anecdotes about interactions with both primary and older students. She acknowledges the dedication of teachers and feels optimistic about the school's direction.

Caroline also convey gratitude for the recruitment process that led them to their role as principal, recognising it as a privilege and looking forward to contributing further to the school's growth.

Board Report

Jimmy Zhou presented the Board report reflecting on the year's progress, highlighting substantial campus upgrades that enhanced both function and appearance. These developments, along with continued excellence in teaching and staff support, have strengthened Chilton's warm and enriching environment. The appointment of Principal Caroline Robertson in late 2023 was acknowledged as a pivotal leadership addition. Her collaborative efforts with Business Director Chris Canton and the expanded senior leadership team—including Michelle Hughes and Sarah Malone—have significantly improved strategic implementation.

Student Achievement and Financial Outlook

Jimmy celebrated the impressive accomplishments of students in academics, sports, and performing arts as strong evidence of Chilton's impact. Although the school recorded a modest operating deficit in 2023, several efficiency and growth measures were implemented with anticipated financial upside in 2024. The school remains in a stable financial position, supported by prudent fiscal management and a solid asset base.

Acknowledgements and Strategic Focus for 2024

Sincere thanks were extended to teachers, staff, trustees, volunteers, and the senior management team for their dedication. The Chair emphasised the importance of a focused and unified approach given ongoing economic challenges. Key strategic goals for 2024 include repositioning preschool, consolidating dual pathways, continuing campus improvements, enhancing relationships both locally and internationally, and fostering stronger community engagement. Confidence was expressed in achieving these goals and advancing the school's long-term vision by building on its strengths in the performing arts.

Gratitude

A statement that I've read in a number of historical AGM reports says that the "school is in good heart". I actually understand what that now means and I think it's an incredibly beautiful sentiment.

Thank you, Caroline, thank you, Jimmy, for the countless hours of work that you've done over the past year and getting us here.

Date for next AGM

You are warmly invited to the 2025 AGM on 26 July 2025, 11am, Staff Room (old library in FitzGerald).

Meeting Closed with school prayer.